BOATER INFORMATION BROCHURE

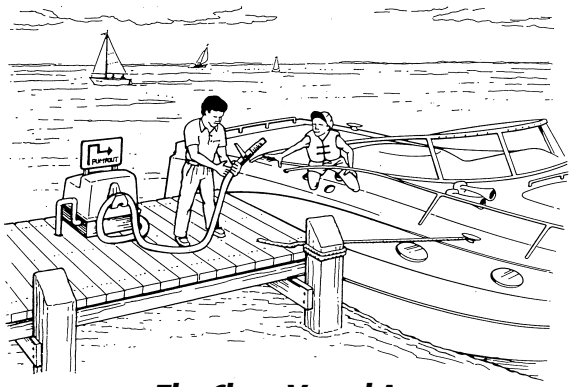
What Does the Clean Vessel Act Do?

The primary goal of the Clean Vessel Act (CVA) is to reduce overboard sewage discharge from recreational boats. The CVA provides funds to states for the construction, renovation, operation, and maintenance of pumpout stations for holding tanks and dump stations for portable toilets.

Congress passed the CVA after finding that there was an inadequate number of onshore sewage disposal facilities in waters frequented by recreational boats and determining that these vessels may be a substantial contributor to localized degradation of water quality.

Under the Clean Vessel Act, $40 million will be distributed to the states over the five-year period between 1993 and 1997. These funds come from boaters and anglers, through taxes paid on fishing tackle and motorboat fuels under the Federal Aid in Sport Fishing Restoration Program.

As a result of the CVA, boaters can expect to see more convenient and reasonably priced pumpout and dump stations, and cleaner waters, resulting in more healthy fish and shellfish populations.



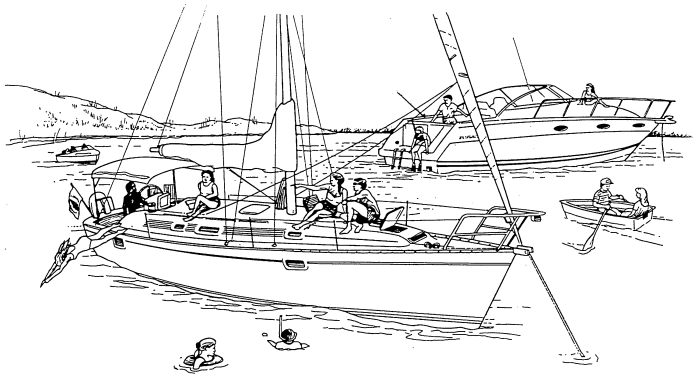
The Clean Vessel Act Pumpout Grant Program

Why Should I Worry About Boat Sewage?

No one wants to take a swim where they know there is raw sewage from boats. No one wants to eat raw shellfish that could be contaminated. We all hear a lot about pollution in our water, but what can we, as individuals, do about that pollution? Properly managing sewage on our boats is something everyone can do right now to help improve local water quality.

Most of the areas where boats congregate—harbors, anchorages, and marinas, are naturally sheltered and semi-enclosed. That means these sheltered areas also are not flushed as well as more open waters. The end result is that any pollution we put there ends up staying there. Bacteria, chemicals, and nutrients contained in human waste from boats can overload small, poorly flushed waterways and cause local water quality problems.

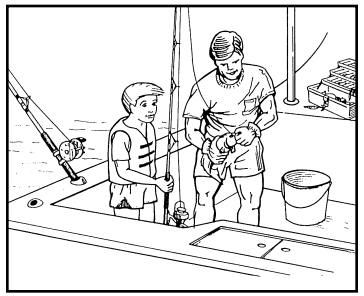
As we fish, swim, boat, sail, ski, or relax on our boats, we rely on having clean water. In fact, in a recent survey, more than 95% of boaters interviewed said they were concerned about the marine environment. Clean water makes all of our recreational activities more enjoyable, so let's all join in to help clean up our waterways.



The Green Issue

Boat sewage dumped into our waters may affect aquatic plants, fish, and other animals. The nutrients, microorganisms, and chemicals contained in human waste from boats have a negative impact on coastal and inland waters, particularly in sheltered or shallow areas not naturally flushed by tide or current.

- Sewage contains nutrients that fertilize algae in the water. This can make algae grow out of control, reducing the amount of light which reaches underwater grasses. Algae can also settle on the grass, smothering it. These grasses provide nursery areas for young fish and help prevent shoreline erosion.
- Flow-through treatment devices (Type I or II MSDs) reduce bacteria in the sewage but do not reduce the nutrients or organic matter going into the water.



- Organic matter in sewage is decomposed in the water by bacteria. During this process, the bacteria use oxygen. As a result, sewage in the water may deplete the water's oxygen level, stressing fish and other aquatic animals that need oxygen to survive.
- Microorganisms from your digestive system are found in human waste. Once they are in the water, they can pass diseases like hepatitis to people in contact with the water. They also can contaminate shellfish beds, passing disease on to people who eat raw oysters or clams.
- Chemical products used in onboard treatment devices, such as chlorine and formaldehyde, can be toxic to marine and estuarine life and could pose a problem in areas where boats congregate and where there is little tidal flushing action.

No Discharge Areas

The Clean Water Act establishes two categories of water where the discharge of all boat sewage is illegal. Not only must Type III Marine Sanitation Devices—containing untreated waste—be secured in these waters, but Types I and II—with treated sewage—also must be prevented from overboard discharging.

These No Discharge Areas are:

- Rivers without interstate navigation;
- All enclosed lakes and reservoirs not used for interstate travel and where entry or exit by boats in the water is not possible, even through locks and dams; and
- Areas designated by states and approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), such as those near shellfish beds or drinking water intakes.

States may request EPA to approve *No Discharge Areas* when "the protection and enhancement of the quality of some or all of the waters" within their boundaries require such environmental protection and EPA agrees there are adequate boat sewage pumpout and dump stations in the area.

Currently, discharge of boat sewage has been prohibited in all or some waters of 14 states, including Nantucket and Wareham Harbors in Massachusetts; all waters except tidal waters in New Hampshire; Lakes Champlain, George and Menphremagog in both New York and Vermont; and Rhode Island's Great Salt Pond in Block Island.

As increased numbers of pumpout and dump stations funded by the Clean Vessel Act are built, recreational boaters can expect to see more *No Discharge Areas* created.

Are You in Compliance?

Equipment on Boat:	Legal?	Restrictions and Comments:
Installed toilet without MSD	No	
Installed toilet with macerator	No	USCG regulations require that all installed toilets have an attached MSD. Macerator doesn't count as MSD.
Installed toilet with Type I MSD*	Yes (But not okay in *No Discharge Areas*)	Okay on boats < 65′. Discharge is < 1000 per 100 milliliters of fecal coliform bacteria with no visibly identifiable floating solids.
Installed toilet with Type II MSD*	Yes (But not okay in *No Discharge Areas*)	Okay on any size boat. Found on larger boats because of electricity and space requirements. Discharge is < 200 per 100 milliliters of fecal coliform bacteria with < 150 milligrams of suspended solids per liter.
Installed toilet with Type III MSD*	Yes	Keeps waste out of water by using a holding tank. Discharge at onshore pumpout facility or via "Y" valve while more than 3 miles offshore in the ocean.
Portable toilet	Legal on any boat.**	Doesn't fall under USCG regulations of MSD's.
No installed toilet	Yes	Remember *No Discharge Area* rules.

Note: *Some states have additional restrictions. For example, in Florida, houseboats may only have a Type III MSD or a permanent sewer line to shore. Check on your state's laws.*

** Must be USCG certified.*

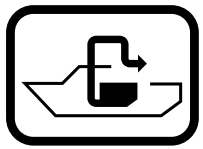
*** Not legal in the Province of Ontario.*

Retrofitting Your Boat

Under U.S. Coast Guard regulations, if your boat has an installed toilet, you are required to have a certified Marine Sanitation Device (MSD). Type I or II MSD's treat sewage and discharge it into the water. Type III MSD's include holding tanks that retain and discharge untreated human body waste.

The sewage disposal system you select will depend on your boat's design, space configuration, and electrical system. Other considerations are cost and how often you boat in *No Discharge Areas*, where even treated sewage can't be dumped. Remember that any MSD you select must be certified by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Boaters can choose a treatment device, a holding tank, or a combination of the two. Holding tank capacity depends on the number of people customarily aboard, usual trip length, and whether you anchor or use marinas offering toilet and/or sewage disposal facilities. Other options include manual, electrical or vacuum toilets; pipes or hoses; and flexible or rigid tanks. Many owners of smaller craft can opt for less costly, unregulated portable toilets.



KEEP OUR WATER CLEAN– USE PUMPOUTS

CLEAN WATER TRUST

SPORT FISH RESTORATION

Your purchase of fishing equipment and motor boat fuels supports Sport Fish Restoration and pumpout and dump station facilities

For further information, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at 703-358-1845